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SUBJECT: POLICE REFORM: REGIONAL COMMANDS AND RAPID
REACTION FORCE TO MEET NEAR-TERM CHALLENGES

REF: A) KABUL 106 B) KABUL 852 C) KABUL 662 D) KABUL
942 E) KABUL 840

Classified By: AMBASSADOR RONALD NEUMANN, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) Summary: The GOA has a pressing need for an Afghan National Police (ANP) that can respond to counter civil disturbances as well as law enforcement cases. As foreseen ref A, Ambassador Neumann and LTG Eikenberry discussed and jointly agreed to a revised approach developed by OSC-A and INL. A number of changes in the police training program will meet increased threats, particular regional security problems, improve training and still keep the program focused on its long term goal of producing an accountable and civilian police force. One aspect of this approach now accepted by the Ministry of Interior is to develop regional command centers as well as a redesigned rapid reaction force. These will still need resources to respond to the needs of provincial police but in the long run they can become more centers of training and control than force providers.

12. (C) The question of specialized training, including paramilitary training for both the border and standby police in high-risk areas, was also resolved on the basis that it would be threat-based and defensive in nature. While the security situation in the south and east means that the ANP there must be empowered to protect itself against the lethal elements present there) insurgents, drug smugglers, and organized crime - the long-term objective of the GoA and all members of the international community is a civilian police force that can concentrate on community law enforcement, leaving other security tasks to the ANA. Police training in the midst of an insurgency is a new field and we have learned and applied important lessons to shape the program to the real environment. It would not be surprising if we still have a few things to learn that may require further change as time goes on. We will have to continue to

work with the Germans closely so that they accept that some actions necessary to keep the police alive and effective in the midst of an insurgency are transitional on the road to the civilian police we agree is the end goal. End Summary.

¶3. (U) OCS-A under CFC-A command (LTG. Eikenberry) is the implementer for police training while the Ambassador has a role in policy guidance. The two met in late February with key staff from INL, OSC-A, the Embassy, and CFC-A to review the police training way ahead. They agreed on the approach and key factors described below.

Regional Commands

¶4. (C) OSC-A explained the concept of regional commands as necessary to improve the central government's command and control over provincial police and facilitate cooperation between the ANP and ANA. In a contingency, the regional command would have the benefit of a common sight picture (i.e. police and army disposition, location of the disruption) and the means to effect complementary action) civil protection and counter-operations) these being separate and distinct activities working to a common end. Ambassador Neumann and LTG Eikenberry agreed that the regional police commanders (two-star flag officers) would have the resources needed to reinforce their position politically. Otherwise, provincial police chiefs would be reluctant to give up autonomy, especially since many of them were closely linked to provincial

governors. MG Durbin indicated that the Regional Command is a concept still in its early stages) commanders have been appointed, now we need to build up their capabilities, staffs, and budgets. Planners are aware of the need to bolster the authority of the regional commanders by giving them access to sufficient resources.

Rapid Response) Quick Reaction Force

¶5. (C) The participants quickly identified the availability of a police reserve as an important element available to reinforce the ability of the regional commander and to respond to crises. MoI, with OSC-A support, is carrying out a reform that will combine the police reserves and standby units. Together they will operate as a quick reaction force (QRF), consisting of eight battalions - five to be located with the regional commands and three in Kabul. Roughly 2,000 ANP would be part of this force, which could be rapidly deployed from capital or regional headquarters in case of need. (Note: GoA Presidential airlift assets could be diverted to this purpose in case of emergency. CFC-A will provide additional needed airlift until the GoA has sufficient capability. End note.)

¶6. (C) Training and equipping the reorganized standby force would come second in priority after the border police (control of the border remains the most critical GoA need.) Police now assigned to standby units have been through basic training but need advanced training at the unit level. This force, once redesigned and properly trained, will provide an essential near-term capability for the ANP, and in so doing will enhance emergency response capacity) a growing concern within the GoA. As such, the timeline is critical, in order to preclude the Afghan government from reconstituting local militia forces to meet pressing security emergencies they fear otherwise unprepared for. Both LTG Eikenberry and Ambassador Neumann noted the

need to work closely with President Karzai, his senior leadership, and the Parliament to get their full support for the ANP.

Regional Variations in Advanced Training

17. (C) Agreement was reached also on the question of regional variation in ANP training in order to respond to security situations in different parts of the country. In particular, they discussed whether a need exists for a paramilitary dimension and the unique training entailed. It was agreed that any additional training should be clearly sized to the actual threats to policemen and be defensive in nature. ANP troops should not be taught offensive counterinsurgency or high-end paramilitary tactics at the Regional Training Centers) any paramilitary training considered essential to their mission could be taught by military police and police mentors based at the PRTs. It was agreed that the long-term goal of the international community, including the U.S., is to develop a civilian police force that whose primary duty will be community law enforcement. Developing paramilitary skills for the police in some areas, while essential in the short run, should not be allowed to undermine this goal.

18. (C) There is concern among many in the international community, particularly the Germans, about a paramilitarization of the police force. While countries recognize the immediate need for ANP patrolmen to learn the skills needed to protect themselves, they would like to see an end-state in

which the ANP are sharply differentiated in roles and responsibilities from the ANA. In executing orderly, responsive, and complementary actions by the ANSF, sharply differentiated roles are essential. As such, all agreed that it would be helpful if the police program planners could better articulate this, as well as the long-term goals of the reform, in a form that could be shared with the Germans and other international partners to obtain their understanding and agreement. OSC-A agreed to take on this tasking. Once we are able to brief a comprehensive plan (beyond our existing intention) to transition through the insurgency to a fully civilian oriented force, Ambassador Neumann undertook to work on raising the German,s comfort level with our plans - while recognizing that German ideological comfort cannot be allowed to hold up vital training to keep ANP alive in the midst of an insurgency.

Comment

19. (C) While reforming a police force as corrupt and incapable as the ANP will take time, the GoA faces pressing immediate needs. In recent security assessments, governors of key provinces such as Zabol, Paktika, Helmand, and Kunar told GoA senior leadership that they needed more police, as well as better equipment and training for the police they already had (ref c). Recent incidents in Herat (ref d) and Faryab (ref e) have also brought into high relief the ineffectiveness of the ANP in some areas. The focus on developing regional commands and a fully-trained rapid reaction force should alleviate some of these concerns, as well as other issues raised several months ago in ref a. Meanwhile, both we and the Germans are continuing our programs of leadership reform and training for both officers and patrolmen, programs that are vital to the GoA,s long-term objective of a capable, competent, and honest police force.

